

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended): A combination of a sleeve and a modular orthopaedic implant, the combination comprising:
a modular orthopaedic implant having a first component with a female junction element and a second component with a male junction element receivable within the female junction element to couple the components together in direct, self-locking taper relationship; and
a hollow, resilient sleeve capable of being rolled upon itself into a ring-like configuration,
the sleeve having an outer portion engageable with the female junction element and an inner portion engageable with the male junction element, the sleeve being positionable between the male and female junction elements while the outer portion of the sleeve engages the female junction element and the inner portion of sleeve engages the male junction element, whereby the sleeve allows the first component and the second component of the modular orthopaedic implant to be temporarily assembled without coupling the first component and the second component together in direct, self-locking taper relationship.
2. (canceled)
3. (previously presented): The combination sleeve of claim 1 wherein the inner portion of the sleeve is smaller than the male function element, the sleeve being stretchable to conform to the shape of the male junction element.
4. (previously presented): The combination of claim 1 wherein the sleeve is initially rolled into a ring shape and is able to be unrolled over the male junction element.
5. - 7. (canceled)

8. (currently amended): A combination of a sleeve and a modular orthopaedic implant, the combination comprising:

a modular orthopaedic implant having a first component with a male junction element having a tapered male portion and a second component with a female junction element having a tapered bore corresponding to the male portion, the male portion and the female portion being directly engageable in self-locking taper relationship to couple the components together; and

a hollow, resilient sleeve having an outer portion engageable with the female portion and an inner portion engageable with the male portion, the sleeve being positionable between the male and female portions to provide a separation between the male and female portions while the outer portion of the sleeve engages the female portion and the inner portion of sleeve engages the male portion, whereby the sleeve allows the first component and the second component of the modular orthopaedic implant to be temporarily assembled without coupling the first component and the second component together in direct, self-locking taper relationship.

9. (previously presented): The combination of claim 8 wherein the first and second components are provisional implant components.

10. (previously presented): The combination claim 8 wherein the first and second components are actual implantable components.

11. (previously presented): The combination of claim 8 wherein one of the first and second components is a provisional implant component and the other of the first and second components is an actual implant component.

12. (previously presented): The combination of claim 8 wherein one of the male and female junction elements comprises metal and the other of the male and female junction elements comprises a polymer.

13. (previously presented): The combination of claim 8 wherein the male and female junction elements both comprise metal.

14. (original): The combination of claim 8 wherein the first component comprises a stem of a femoral hip implant and the second component comprises a proximal body of a femoral hip implant.

15. (original): The combination of claim 14 further comprising a modular head component engageable with the proximal body and an acetabular component engageable with the head component.

16. (original): The combination of claim 8 wherein the first component comprises a neck extension of a femoral hip implant and the second component comprises a head of a femoral hip implant.

17. (previously presented): A method of temporarily joining modular orthopaedic implant components, the method comprising:

providing a modular orthopaedic implant having a first component with a male junction element and a second component with a female junction element for receiving the male junction element to couple the components together;

providing a sleeve having a hollow sleeve body with an outer portion able to be received in the female junction element and an inner portion able to receive the male junction element;

positioning the sleeve between the first and second components with the sleeve received in the female junction element and the male junction element received in the sleeve to temporarily maintain the first and second components in an assembled condition;

ascertaining the fit of the first and second components with a patient's anatomy by placing the first and second components in a surgical opening in the patient's body with the sleeve interposed between them to hold them in an assembled condition;

separating the first and second components while leaving the sleeve engaged with one of the components;

engaging another component with the sleeve to create another assembly; and
ascertaining the fit of the new assembly with the patient's anatomy.

18. (original): The method of claim 17 further comprising:
stretching the sleeve over the male junction element.

19. (original): The method of claim 17 further comprising:
providing the sleeve in an initial rolled-up configuration; and unrolling the sleeve
over the male junction element.

20. (canceled)

21. (currently amended): A method of temporarily joining modular orthopaedic
components, the method comprising:

providing a first modular orthopaedic component with a male junction element
having a tapered male portion and a second modular orthopaedic component with a female
junction element having a tapered bore corresponding to the male portion, the male portion and
the female portion being directly engageable in self-locking taper relationship to couple the
components together;

providing a hollow resilient sleeve having an outer portion engageable with the
female portion and an inner portion engageable with the male portion;

positioning the sleeve between the first and second components to provide a
separation between the male and female portions while the outer portion of the sleeve engages
the female portion and the inner portion of sleeve engages the male portion, whereby the sleeve
allows the first modular orthopaedic component and the second modular orthopaedic component
to be temporarily assembled without coupling the first modular orthopaedic component and the
second modular orthopaedic component together in direct, self-locking taper relationship.

22. (previously presented): The method of claim 21 wherein providing the sleeve
comprises providing the sleeve rolled upon itself into a ring-like configuration; and wherein

positioning the sleeve comprises unrolling the sleeve over the male junction element before inserting the male junction element into the female junction element.

23. (previously presented): The combination of claim 8 wherein the sleeve has a first end and a second end, both ends being open.

24. (previously presented): The combination of claim 1 wherein at least one of the first and second components of the modular orthopaedic implant is a provisional implant component.

25. (previously presented): The method of claim 17 wherein at least one of the first and second components of the modular orthopaedic implant is a provisional implant component.

26. (previously presented): The combination of a sleeve and a modular orthopedic implant of Claim 1, wherein the female junction interacts directly with the male junction to couple the components together.